WHEREAS, the massive devastation of Hurricane Katrina, one of the largest natural disasters in the nation's history, starkly demonstrated the need for enhanced evacuation efforts; and

WHEREAS, preventing loss of life and serious injury should be the primary concern of all levels of government in any major natural or manmade disaster; and

WHEREAS, the most vulnerable — frail elderly, people with disabilities, families with young children, and more — require particular attention and concern due to the difficulty they often face evacuating themselves and getting to safety; and

WHEREAS, some 5,000 children were separated from their parents during Katrina and frail elderly residents were found alone in their homes many days after the hurricane; and

WHEREAS, the most valiant efforts of emergency responders can be hampered by the sheer magnitude of those needing help to evacuate; and

WHEREAS, professional emergency managers have advanced the critical concept that we all need to be "first responders" in a disaster to assist those who may have trouble getting to safety; and

WHEREAS, the budgets of emergency response agencies, at all levels of government, do not allow for unlimited numbers of equipment and personnel, meaning substantial community involvement is a necessity to effectively respond to major disasters particularly on behalf of the most vulnerable; and

WHEREAS, these fiscal realities are even greater in times of economic downturn, leading to actual cutbacks in capacity for some agencies; and

WHEREAS, active citizen involvement in evacuating the most vulnerable can help relieve the burden often shouldered alone by their caregivers and emergency responders, thus acting as a valuable "force multiplier" in disasters; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best of historic American tradition to rally as communities and neighborhoods when faced with calamity to help one another, especially those who need it most;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) strongly supports actively involving all citizens during disasters through creation of community-based, "neighbor-helping-neighbor" approaches to assist in evacuating the most vulnerable:
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ALEC supports the creation of easy-to-use communication tools for use by the vulnerable to help identify those who need help or are safely out in order to assist neighbors, friends, caregivers and emergency responders:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that ALEC supports the creation of similar simple, easy-to-use essential information tools, kept by the vulnerable, so that those assisting them can, for example, contact their relatives and doctor quickly once evacuated to get the medical and other critical assistance they need following a disaster.